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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR DECEMBER 13, 2005

1. This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for December 13, 2005. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

2. HURRIYET: Diyarbakir's 5th Heavy Penalty Court sentenced a 27-year-old woman to one in year in prison for shouting a Kurdish slogan saying "Long live Apo (Abdullah Ocalan)" during an unauthorized demonstration held on May 1 in Diyarbakir. The defendant rejected the claims that she shouted slogans in support for Ocalan, and claimed that she had only shouted "Long live the brotherhood of people." The women's offence was proved by police film.

3. CUMHURIYET / OZGUR GUNDEM: A stent has been placed in the artery of Van Centennial University Rector Yucel Askin. Health condition of Askin is reported as good following the operation. (This press summary is from 12/11 edition.) The doctors have warned that Askin's health condition might deteriorate if the court decides to send him to prison, reported Cumhuriyet daily.

4. RADIKAL / SABAH: The controversial trial of Yucel Askin will be held tomorrow at Van's 3rd Heavy Penalty Court. There are nine defendants of the case; Rector Yucel Askin, Vice-Rectors Prof. Ayse Yuksel and Prof. Hasan Ceylan, General Secretary Prof. Isik Tepe, Dean of Agricultural Faculty Prof.

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Firat Cengiz, Deputy General Secretary Salih Yurtkuran, three staff members of the university and the Turkish representative of a Spanish company. Charges were brought against Askin for alleged irregularities conducted during a tender of the university for alleged attempts to breach personal privacy considerations and collect information about individual political views, ethnic origins and religious beliefs of 418 people and students in order to use such information as a threat on people's future professional careers and for alleged formation of an "illegal organization" (within the university) by means of providing unfair economic gains and job opportunities in academic and administrative positions. The Van Prosecutor's Office have demanded a total of record-breaking 2,131 years of prison sentence for the charges brought against Askin and 1,254 years of prison sentence for the Vice-Rectors. Since five months have passed since the arrest of the rector, and because of the rector's serious health condition, the Court will most probably order the release of the rector at tomorrow's trial, reported the newspaper. Rector Askin said that he will attend the court session under the supervision of a doctor. The rector will stand trial on Friday for other charges brought against him for his alleged illegal keeping of historical artifacts at this home.

5. HURRIYET / RADIKAL: Separate delegations comprised of the CHP (Republican People's Party) and YOK (Higher Education Board) members will go to Van today to attend the trial of Van Centennial University Rector Yucel Askin as observers. CHP delegation will submit a report on the trial to CHP leader later.

6. RADIKAL / HURRIYET: Sirnak Governor Osman Gunes and Silopi Mayor Muhsin Konur, who were waiting for the arrival of Minister of Education Huseyin Celik to the Silopi district, quarreled over the problem of trucks piling up at the Habur border gate in Silopi and the allegations of bribery there, in front of journalists. While Governor Gunes argued that police alone cannot be blamed for immoral actions for which he contended the way was paved by the people, the mayor argued that both parties engaging in immoral illegal actions should be held liable for these actions.

7. CUMHURIYET / RADIKAL / HURRIYET / OZGUR GUNDEM: A 39-year-old person, who was reportedly infuriated by his family's refusal to consent to his marriage plans, opened fire with a Kalashnikov gun at people dancing during a wedding ceremony in Diyarbakir. Thirteen people were wounded as a result of the incident. The Jandarma arrested the assailant.

8. RADIKAL / OZGUR GUNDEM: A 5.3-magnitude earthquake which shook Bingol's Karliova district did not cause any casualties, but sparked great panic among the people. (This summary is from 12/11 edition.) Radikal daily reported that fifty houses, which were being built by the government for the victims of the March 12 and March 14 earthquakes in Bingol's

Karlioiva district have not been completed for four and a half months. Local people, blaming authorities for starting the construction process late, are worried about how they can survive in tents in the approaching winter conditions.

19. OZGUR GUNDEM: During inspections at a Jandarma checkpoint on a road in Batman, teams from the Batman Jandarma Regional Command discovered many guns and drums hidden in an unseen section of a private vehicle.

110. OZGUR GUNDEM: Erdal Akpınar, a brigadier general, reportedly held a meeting last week and invited the Yuksekova Mayor and the non-governmental organizations to a meeting at the Brigade Command. Akpınar, after showing the invitees a 15-minute film of the last two year's public demonstrations, reportedly drew attention to the yellow-red-green colored flags carried by the people during the demonstrations and said, "All my tolerance has been exhausted by these actions...The state is powerful and due measures will be taken hereinafter." The general further disclosed that soldiers would not shop from the local tradesmen until August 2006. NGOs, who reportedly asked why DEHAP members were not invited to the meeting, told the general that the problems could not be solved through threats and oppression.

111. OZGUR GUNDEM: Following the refusal of the Ovacik Subgovernor's Office to further a prosecution process, the Malatya Regional Administrative Court also overturned the charge filed against the security forces for allegedly setting a forest on fire in the Ovacik district of Tunceli between September 15 and 21, 2004.

112. OZGUR GUNDEM: Sirnak's former DEHAP Provincial Chairperson Izzet Belge, who was detained early in December together with six people in Silopi as a result of the security forces' home raids (see press summaries 12/06 and 07 and 08), was released a few days later. Belge dismissed any alleged links the detainees had with the recent bomb attacks in Silopi and blamed the media for fabricating the news of the bombs found in a house.

113. OZGUR GUNDEM: The 2005 Turkish dictionary prepared by the Turkish Language Institution reportedly does not mention the etymological sources of Kurdish words inherited by the Turkish language. Despite that the dictionary cites the names of even defunct languages as it traces back the history of words. The etymological resources of Kurdish-origin words are given either as Persian or "colloquial word."

114. OZGUR GUNDEM: The farmers were not able to sell 50,000 tons of lentils they cultivated in the Kiziltepe district of Mardin because of recently imported lentils in the market.

115. SABAH: Turkish Parliament's Human Rights Commission completed a 20-page report it has been drafting concerning the November 9 Semdinli bombing. According to some highlights of the report, General Yasar Buyukanit's remarks saying that he was well acquainted with Ali Kaya, one of the officers held as a defendant of the Semdinli case, was reportedly an "unfortunate" intervention in the ongoing judicial process. The military planes flying low over the people attending a funeral of the persons who died during the demonstrations following the Semdinli incident, was perceived by the region of the people as "intimidation." The report suggested an end to the relationship between the state and (PKK) defectors, and urged taking necessary measures to hinder the formation of illegal organizations.

116. CUMHURİYET: Two families peacefully ended a 30-year-long feud at a dinner organized with the efforts of the Viransehir Subgovernor (Sanliurfa province), Mayor and some influential families in the district.

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